

NRCS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT PROPOSAL (FIRST DRAFT)

Agricultural Producer Resilience Technical Assistance Program

Lead Agency: Guadalupe-Coyote RCD

Participating Agencies: Loma Prieta and San Benito RCDs

Service Area: Santa Clara and San Benito Counties

Submitted: February 10, 2023

Abstract:

GCRC, Loma Prieta and San Benito RCDs will develop a multi-county technical assistance and education program within Santa Clara and San Benito Counties that will be designed to provide assistance to agricultural producers in response to heightened conservation challenges over the last several years, including but not limited to drought, floods, catastrophic fires and high wind events. Specific goals will be to: 1) provide technical assistance with conservation planning and implementation; 2) provide damage assessments and reports to support agricultural applications for USDA financial assistance; 3) develop and implement an agricultural producer outreach and education program regarding best management practices to support climate adaptation and post-disaster activities; and 4) provide stipends to college students to allow them an opportunity to gain field experience as an incentive to consider a potential career path with NRCS or other conservation agencies.

This program will allow the three RCDs, which currently have less than four (4) full-time equivalency (FTE) between them, to hire 1-3 part-time conservation program specialists to provide no-cost technical assistance to agricultural producers regarding planning and best management practices, and to expand the capacity of the NRCS and FSA emergency response programs, including ECP, CSP and EWP, to quickly respond to post-disaster applications. The expectation is that after receiving these no-cost services from the RCDs, agricultural producers will be able to use the resulting information to submit applications to USDA for a variety of services and financial assistance, including disaster relief funds. Priority for services will be given to historically underserved farmers and ranchers, as defined by USDA-NRCS. The RCDs will prioritize recruitment of a multilingual speaker who can assist NRCS with in-field translation services, and the college students will be offered one week of paid field experience with the conservation program specialist to allow a greater diversity of students who may not otherwise have the economic means to participate in an unpaid internship.

Objectives:

Provide part-time conservation program specialists to:

- provide technical assistance in identifying resource concerns and/or provide planning resources for up to thirty (30) producers.
- conduct outreach to historically underserved agricultural producers.
- conduct damage assessments on an as-needed basis.
- provide soil and water testing for up to thirty (30) producers.
- provide an introduction to field work for up to six (6) college students serving as resource assessment interns.

Term:

- 12 months

Budget: *

	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Non-federal Funds</u>
Personnel (Salaries & Fringe):		
• Conservation Program Specialist (1,248 hours @ 50.00)	62,400.00	0.00
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• GCRC D Executive Director (project manager) (120 staff hours @ 82.50)	0.00	9,900.00
• Resource Assessment Interns (240 hours @ 25.00)	6,000.00	0.00
Subtotal	130,800.00	9,900.00
Contracting:		
• LPRCD: field visit coordination (52 staff hours @ 82.50)	4,290.00	0.00
• SBRC D: field visit coordination (73 staff hours @ 75.00)	3,900.00	1,575.00
Subtotal	8,190.00	1,575.00
Travel:		
• 3,000 miles @ .58 (current IRS rate for mileage)	1,740.00	0.00
Subtotal	1,740.00	0.00
Training:		
• Employee workshops	1,200.00	0.00
Subtotal	1,200.00	0.00
Supplies and Equipment:		
• PPE and field supplies	2,000.00	0.00
• Plan, map, and curriculum materials	2,000.00	0.00
• Testing and field tools (already owned)	0.00	750.00
• Lab analysis & recommendations	5,000.00	0.00
Subtotal	9,000.00	750.00
Other:		
• Board Member Time (15 hours @ 29.95)	0.00	449.25
• Associate Director Time (30 hours @ 29.95)	0.00	898.50
• LPRCD Volunteer Soil Conservationist (52 hours @ 29.95)	0.00	1,557.40
Subtotal	0.00	2,905.15
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Total Estimated Budget	\$150,930.00	\$15,130.15

* This budget is based on two part-time conservation program specialists, but three part-time employees would provide optimal results.